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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

LEADERSHIP NOTE

RUSSIA

Yevgeniy Primakov and Iraq [redacted]

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Whom Does He Know? [redacted]

Primakov has known Saddam Husayn since 1969, when he was chief Middle East correspondent for *Pravda*, working in Cairo and frequently visiting Baghdad, and Saddam was deputy chairman of Iraq's Revolution Command Council. Later, as an aide to former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Primakov served as Moscow's shuttle diplomat to Iraq during the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-91, meeting with Saddam on several occasions. Primakov's book, *Mission to Baghdad*, chronicles that experience. In a June 2001 interview, he claimed not to have seen Saddam in over 10 years. [redacted]

Primakov also has a longstanding relationship with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. He described Aziz to journalists in November 1996 as "my comrade for many years." During his Cairo years (1966-70), Primakov dealt frequently with Aziz, who then was chief editor of the newspaper *Al-Thawrah*. As Foreign Minister (1996-98), Primakov met with Aziz in Moscow in November 1996 and March 1997, in Baghdad in May 1997, and in Moscow in November 1997. On the last occasion, the talks were attended on the Iraqi side by Dr. Riyad al-Qaysi, Foreign Ministry Under Secretary, and Dr. Hasan Fahmi Jumah, Iraq's Ambassador to the Russian Federation. [redacted]

Other Iraqi officials with whom Primakov has met include Ambassador Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, then head of the Iraqi team to the oil talks with the United Nations (Moscow, April 1996); the Speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly Sadun

Hammadi (Moscow, July 1997); and Abd-Al-Ghani Abd-Al-Ghafur, Bath Party Iraq Command member (Moscow, April 1998). (U)

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What Has He Done? [redacted]

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In 1994, according to an Arabic-language newspaper published in London, Primakov, then head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, made an unannounced visit to Jordan, where he met with unnamed Iraqi politicians, whom he attempted to persuade to recognize Kuwait. [redacted]

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Primakov played a prominent role in defusing the crisis that arose in late 1997 when Saddam refused to allow UN weapons inspectors into the country. US diplomats reported at the time that several Arab diplomats resident in Cairo spoke highly of Primakov's abilities and his understanding of the region, praising his command of Arabic and his skill at dealing with Saddam. These diplomats noted that Primakov had sensitivity to Arab interests that the United States lacked. [redacted]

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While he was Premier, Primakov had few public dealings with Iraq, judging from the Russian and Iraqi press. [redacted]

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This note was prepared by analysts in the Office of Russian and European Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Russia Issue Manager, OREA, [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

Primakov has spoken out frequently in
opposition to US military action against Iraq.

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[REDACTED] Seymour
Hersh in *The New Yorker* magazine in April 1999
reported that Aziz in November 1997 wired a
payment of \$800,000 to a bank account traceable
to Primakov.

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